

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

February 16, 2017

Jayme Stevenson
First Selectman of Darian

SB 763 “An Act Concerning Workers’ Compensation Coverage for Police Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder”

I am in *opposition* to SB 763.

The bill would provide for medical and full wage replacement under Workers’ Compensation for local and state police, career and volunteer firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder as the result of “visually witnessing the death of a human being, or the immediate aftermath of such death” while on duty.

As the First Selectman of Darian I am grateful for our first responders as they are an integral part of our community. What is at question is whether local property taxpayers should be mandated to provide special mental stress benefits without any financial assistance from the State.

If the bill were to be enacted, the financial implications would likely be considerable to Darian. Based on previous reports from legislation proposed in years past, these claims could reach over \$1 million on any particular town or city for the duration of the claim. As indicated in the Governor’s proposed budget, municipal aid will likely be reduced by a considerable amount in the upcoming Fiscal Year. The reduction in state aid, along with towns and cities heavy reliance on the property tax, this proposal will erode the finances of municipal budgets.

I have been an advocate to reduce unfunded state mandates on municipalities. As local leaders, we strive to make sound financial decisions. If this proposal were to be enacted, it would place a strain on the backs of local property taxpayers with limited control from local leaders.

Again, local officials value the service of first responders. Municipal employees have a host of benefits to assist them during difficult times, they include health insurance, disability leave and Employee Assistance Programs. These are programs that are negotiated through our labor agreements.

The General Assembly has, and should continue to be wise to take no action on this proposed new state mandate.

CCM urges the Committee to **take no action on SB 763.**